

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2, 4, 13, 14, 18, 26, 27, 29 and 32-35 are pending. All claims have been rejected.

The Examiner rejects claims 2, 4, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Although Applicant does not agree with the Examiner that a person of skill in the art would not understand from the present specification that various features of the different embodiments could be combined, Applicant has canceled these claims to expedite prosecution.

Turning now to the rejection of the independent claims, the Examiner rejects these claims based upon Ursitti and Oatley and in the case of claim 18 also in view of Adkins.

The Examiner agrees that Ursitti does not show an extended hook region surface and body portion that are convexly shaped in the direction orthogonal to the vertical plane passing through a center of the extended hook region surface, a center of said body portion surface and a center of said rod retaining surface and wherein the body portion surface is also convexly shaped along the vertical plane such that the size of the hook opening decreases to a point and thereafter increases. The purpose of this construction is to allow the hook to snap over the rod, that is, the hook is made of a flexible plastic which allows the hook to snap over the rod to prevent accidental disengagement of the hook and rod. The Examiner relies on Oatley for the teaching of a hook with an extended hook region surface that is convexly shaped along the vertical plane passing through a center of the extended hook region surface and wherein the body portion surface is also convexly shaped in the direction orthogonal to the vertical plane such that a size of the hook opening decreases toward a point and thereafter increases.

While it is arguable that Oatley does show such a hook opening, the teachings of Oatley should not be combined with the teachings of Ursitti. The Oatley device is an old patent showing a metal hook. The purpose of the convex hook opening is not the same as in the present invention which allows the hook to snap over the rod, or as claimed, allowing the hook-shaped member to resist movement with respect to the rod when the hook-shaped member is inserted

onto and removed from the rod.

The Oatley reference does not teach or suggest this. It can not teach or suggest this even in combination with Ursitti because the Oatley device is made of a rigid metal. There is no teaching or suggestion in Oatley to make the Oatley device of a flexible plastic material as claimed.

In fact, Oatley says that his device is constructed of a "stout wire" which will provide little or no flexibility.

It is submitted that the Adkins device does not provide the missing teaching. Although Adkins shows a hook which snaps over a rod, Adkins does not teach or suggest the claimed extended hook region surface being convexly shaped in a direction orthogonal to the vertical plane wherein the body portion surface is convexly shaped in the direction orthogonal to the vertical plane and wherein the body portion surface is also convexly shaped along said vertical plane such that a size of said hook openly decreases toward a point and thereafter increases. Accordingly, even if Adkins is combined with Ursitti, it would not teach or suggest the claimed convex surfaces which facilitate allowing the hook shaped member to resist movement with respect to the rod when the hooked shaped member is inserted onto and removed from said rod.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the present invention is not taught or suggested by the references cited and applied by the Examiner.

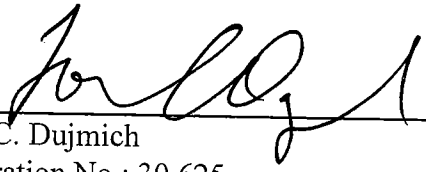
Applicant realizes that a final Office Action has been issued. However, Applicant has amended the claims to recite limitations to address the references cited by the Examiner and which limitations are all directly described and shown in the patent specification. No new matter has been added by the claimed amendments. Applicant respectfully solicits the Examiner, particularly in view of the extensive searching which the Examiner has already done, to allow the amended claims at this time.

In view of the above, Applicant requests reconsideration and submits that all claims in this application are now in condition for allowance, prompt notification of which is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

THIS CORRESPONDENCE IS BEING
SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY
THROUGH THE PATENT AND
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LCD/jh



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